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CASSANDRA
AND OTHER POEMS

BERNARD DREW

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CASSANDRA

AND OTHER POEMS

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CASSANDRA

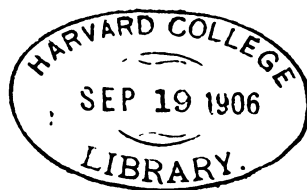
AND OTHER POEMS

BY
BERNARD DREW



LONDON
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TO
A. G. BERRY

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CASSANDRA

SLOW from the west one blood-red sea of fire
Blazed o'er the pillar'd towers of Ilion ;
A thousand domes gleamed in the crimson light,
A thousand rays flashed back to gorgeous Heaven
That seemed aflame with battle-wreck, and there,
Her floating locks kissed by the evening breeze,
Cassandra, regal-born of Priam's line,
Peer of the golden Aphrodite's form,
Paced the long avenues of ancient Troy,
And swaying ever to her mournful words
Spake of the things to be—veiled destinies,—
And the dark tale of Ilion's overthrow.

“ Hear me, ye priests, ye chieftains, people, hear !
Look on this sunset, look athwart the west ;
The fiery orb burns fiercest yonder where
Stretch the long ramparts of the Grecian camp.
Thence shall come forth a fire brighter yet
Lighting the dusky heavens through the night
And glaring on the peaks of distant hills,
And for the fuel, Priam's palaces,

CASSANDRA

Ilion's wrought shrines and temples to her gods
Building their own majestic funeral-pyres !
Hear me ! O hear ! before my eyes there swim
Great lakes of fire and seas of foaming blood,
Myriads of phantom horsemen strive in war,
Banners unfurl, and ruin'd ramparts fall,
And on the wings of tempests stream the souls
Of mighty warriors. Hear ! for still I see
Sights that I scarce dare tell. Amid the scrolls
And flying pennons, one is falling now,
One that flew loftiest through the fiercest fight,
And blazoned on its surface gleams the name,
Hated of Greece, and half the gods beside,
Of thee, my city, thee, O falling Troy !
I cannot rest, for ever on my dreams
Breaks the loud clamour of the clash of arms ;
Battlements rock far through the airy clouds,
Aegis and buckler, casque and helmet ring,
A thousand flying spears shriek to the blast
And din on brazen mail and studded targe !
Hear me awhile, O hear, O heed my words ;
I speak not idly, nor vain prophecies,
For I perceive the dire decrees of fate,
I see the ruins of my father's throne
Blasted and scattered to the winds of heaven,
And Ilion levelled to a heap of stones.
Then shall the dawn steal forth upon the plain
And the red sun from round the topmost hills,
But never more to look down into Troy,
And see her warriors battling round the walls.

CASSANDRA

Awake ! awake ! ye sleep in unbelief,
Ye scorn the promptings of my inmost soul,
My secret commune with futurity.
I speak in truth, for unto me the god,
The beautiful Apollo has vouchsafed
The gift of vision of the things to come.

“ Alas ! they will not hear, they think me mad,
O golden-brow'd Apollo, why didst thou
Add thus a bitter meed unto thy gift ?
My eyes are burning, help, Apollo ! help !
Forgive my broken troth, my fatal love,
Take from thy gift its sting : open their eyes !—

“ O Ilion, Ilion, Ilion, falling low,
Thy long-drawn glories waning to their close ;
Yet art thou doom'd, or doth the vengeful god
So wrack my soul with airy visionings ?
I know not, but I cease not aught to see
Long lines of battle, cataracts of war,
And in my ears the clamour still remains
Of pealing trumps, and arms, and reeling towers.”

SUNSET

I

DAYLIGHT was waning as I viewed the sky,
The setting sun tinged the hill-crests with gold,
The shadows lengthened as the night drew nigh,
Encircling earth within her sombre fold.

II

Deep in the West the flaming orb lay low,
Lighting with purple fire the clouds around,
Bathing the fields with soft effulgent glow,
Slowly it sank to rest without a sound.

III

What scene of grandeur shaped by mortal hands
E'en can approach to Nature's simple care ?
What force of man can gild the verdant lands
With such a wealth of beauty wondrous rare ?

SUNSET

IV

No artist's brush e'er sketched such majesty
As when the night descends upon the deep,
And brooding silence seems to lull the sea
To rest and to a calm and peaceful sleep.

THE DEPARTURE OF DAY

ONCE when Eve was slowly stealing, flinging shadows
far and wide,
Wandering near the shady woodlands, I a virgin
form espied ;
Flitting gently through the forest, dancing in and
out the trees,
Speeded on by every movement of the fragrant
summer breeze.
Never lingering, never staying, ever onward towards
the West,
Towards the few remaining sunbeams hastening now
to take their rest.
As I looked the vision vanished, faded quickly from
the gaze,
As the light of day grew feeble in the sun's declining
rays.
Backward looked I long and keenly in the dim and
failing light,
Piercing vainly through the shadows and fast falling
shades of night,

THE DEPARTURE OF DAY

Hoping, ah ! yes, hoping greatly once again to trace
that form,

But it vanished in the twilight as a rapid summer
storm.

Oft when strolling in the meadows when the day
begins to chill,

To my wandering thoughts and fancies there appears
that phantom still ;

But the true and radiant vision never more have I
beheld

Which in wealth of grace and beauty every earthly
form excelled.

'Twas the spirit of the daylight leaving us when eve
draws nigh

To descend to light the morning in another distant
sky.

AUTUMN

SPRING in its verdant freshness clad is passed ;
The beauteous long-protracted summer hours
Filled with the scent and perfume of the fields
Have gently glided on their silent way
And given place to that most perfect time
When Nature and her attributes all bear
The marks and signs of ripeness that reveal
The mellow sereness of maturity.
Alike on brier, copse, and stately tree
The purple-tinted foliage hangs down.
Gently and one by one the brazen leaves
Enhanced in beauty by the summer sun,
Bend towards the earth and slowly, softly drop,
Thus weaving of themselves a gorgeous pall,
And blazoned carpet o'er the space around.
The country hedge-rows, bathed in mellow light,
Stand rising from the deep, rank, meadow grass,
And lift their purple freight of ripened fruit
Up towards the sun to catch its parting rays
Ere that its strength has waned, and winter storms
Have claimed the period of their sovereignty.

AUTUMN

The very hush that seems to spread around
The precincts of the woods, where Nature's power
Is manifest, seems almost to suggest
A time of ripeness and senility.
Perchance some tree, more tardy than the rest
To shed its foliage, stands with lofty head
Amongst its fellows, naked to the wind
That sings with mournful accents through its leaves ;
This too, survivor of the Summer past,
Reminder of its bright and sunlit hours,
Seems half pathetic in its loneliness.
Thus as it is within fair Nature's realm,
Just as the berries of the trees grow sere,
So to each life there comes a mellow time,
A ripening season, so to speak, a day
Wherein the mind must raise itself aloft
And meditate on things of deeper thought.
So that whene'er the thread that joins the leaf
And binds it close upon the parent stem,
Is severed, it may not be unprepared,
But gently sink, contented, to its grave.

THE VILLAGE BELL

LOVELY stands the quiet village in the dusk of
eventide,
Beauteous in their simple grandeur lie the fields and
meadows wide.
Pleasant sound the children's voices, sweet the music
of the rill,
Flowers with their thousand perfumes all around the
breezes fill.
Sadly tolls the bell at evening when the shadows
gently fall,
And the sun in radiant beauty sinks behind the old
church wall.
Sadder still when in the moonlight gleams the
ancient church's tower,
And its clock with solemn accents tells around the
passing hour.
Long has tolled that bell at evening from its lofty
belfry hung,
Long has welcomed rest and sunset with its massive
brazen tongue.
Oft with muffled note of mourning has it rung a
solemn knell,
Often with rejoicing clearness has it pealed the
wedding bell.

THE VILLAGE BELL

From its dusty turret hanging it has watched the
years roll by,
It has seen the children ripen into grave maturity.
It has viewed the seed and harvest, seen the blade
when newly born,
Watched it slowly, surely, ripen to the mellow ear of
corn.
It has braved the fiercest tempests when the wind
has raged around,
When the fields lie bare and frozen in the grip of
winter bound.
It has carolled forth the message each successive
winter brings,
Of the lowly Bethlehem stable, birthplace of the
King of Kings.
Many a time with sonorous cadence has it rung a
sad refrain
When the last and lingering hour of the year begins
to wane.
Then has pealed a joyous welcome to Aurora's latest
son,
And has tolled each day at evening till in turn its
race was run.
Many and many a generation sleeping 'neath the
churchyard stones
Oft has listed in the twilight to its soft and mellow
tones,
Tolling ever at the sunset of a day or year or life,
Ever bringing rest from labour, respite from the
pressing strife.

TIME

ON noiseless wings with unimagined speed
The restless years fly onward in their course,
Propelled or driven by an unseen force
That towards some ever-nearing point must lead.
We watch the days and almost without heed
Look calmly on their path without remorse,
As though Time were a fully-bridled horse,
Whose quickening footsteps mortals might impede.
And yet how swiftly man speeds to his end,
How all too soon his little race is run ;
Scarce has he breathed before his path must tend
Beyond the stream of years, or light of sun,
Where Time and sense of Space their powers blend
In vast Eternity and stand as one.

SPACE

BUT let us stay and question what is space,
If man may bridge its vast abyss across
And deem it for the moment but a fosse
That oft is spanned by child of human race.
Scan well the question : look into its face :
Is it an ocean where men's souls may toss,
And brood upon some earthly gain or loss ?
Has it appearance, shape, or form of grace ?
Or doth it hap to be a peaceful home
Within whose vaulted chasms dwell the blest,
Who 'neath its dazzling canopy can roam,
But disembodied in eternal rest ?
'Tis vain ; we come but to the infinite
The great unseen, obscurer than the night.

ETERNITY

YET still more dread, in awfulness supreme
 Stands grim Eternity, whose very name
 Suggests a time long ere the planets came
Whereof we scarce can speak, but only dream.
It stretches like a night wherein no gleam
 Of moon peeps forth ; where littleness and fame
 Assume one level and appear the same
When things that are outweigh the things that seem.
Its great untiring mills crush down the years
 And make an aeon as a thing of naught.
Its flail descends upon our hopes and fears
 And scatters far and wide the fruits of thought.
On through the fleeting ages as we roll
Naught can we see eternal but the soul.

STELLAR WORLDS

At night when darkness like a sombre shroud
Lies o'er the heavens and the lunar light
Is dim, when naught except the planets bright
Illuminates the hovering dusky cloud,
We look aloft and view their radiance proud.
At such a time we ponder at the sight
And question if these heralds of the night
Serve but to light the chasms o'er us bowed.
May not these twinkling points be regions filled
With other kindreds of terrestrial mould,
Fields that are ploughed, and acres that are tilled
Or verdant pastures cropped by many a fold,
Perchance containing men whose hearts have
thrilled
In youth, and in maturity grown cold ?

L I F E

SENSATIONS, feelings, that the human mind
Perceives within its narrow finite state
Have all their meanings ; each and all relate
To inward causes of some shape or kind.
But yet the thread from which they all must wind
Remains unknown, unseen, and dark as fate ;
Its course is misty, and or soon or late
It snaps asunder, flying unconfined.
Men may rear up with art and cunning skill
Corporeal structures ; yet the inner breath
That teaches knowledge, judges good and ill,
And forms the single bar 'twixt life and death,
Is lacking, for no human force can scan
The vital, all-pervading soul of man.

DEATH

O DEATH, how sombre seems thy fleeting form,
How dread appears thy awesome might and
power

To cleave in twain life's ever-fleeting hour,
To clothe our placid brooks with darkling storm
And turn to winter summer's hours warm,
Making black threatening clouds o'erhead to
lower,

Hurling thy lightnings from thy gloomy tower
And striking surely on the human swarm.

Yet if we could perceive thee as thou art

And see in thee a messenger of rest,

How gladly should we open wide our heart

Not fearing to obey thy grim behest,

But thrice contented from the world to part,

Gently our sun would settle in the west.

AN EVENING HYMN

I

WHEN twilight falls, and fast the shadows dim
Flit o'er the heaven's breast,
There seems to rise a gentle evening hymn
Of peaceful rest.

II

So low that e'en the cadence of the wind,
Singing the woods along,
Seems as a blast enraged and unconfined
To that sweet song.

III

Softly it passes through the darkening air
From vale and rugged steep ;
Its strains a tuneful message seem to bear
Of coming sleep.

AN EVENING HYMN

IV

For ere the last melodious measures die,
Dusk fills the air around,
And land and sea in sombre silence lie
Lulled by the sound.

A SUNSET

THE day grows dim ; far in the western sky
The fleecy pinnacles are capped with gold.
Deep crimson stains, flecked with a living fire,
Fast creep athwart the heaven's darkening breast.
The dying orb gleams wild with purple light,
Shedding its thousand rays on all around,
Till in a burst of lurid, glowing flame,
Each cloud is fired in majestic line,
And flashing with transcendent loveliness,
Speeds on its course, and swiftly dropping low,
Is quenched beneath the sable hues of dusk.

THE IDEAL

THROUGHOUT the golden-tinted page
Of poets of a world-wide fame
There runs a note from age to age
That each has felt and sung the same.
A vague unfashioned dream that soars
High 'mid the fleecy clouds o'erhead,
That worldly forms of life ignores
And leaves them mingled with the dead ;
And rising on untrammelled wings
Seeks through the vasty realms of space
The higher, broader scope of things
Of nobler form and loftier grace.
'Tis some instinctive hope, whose goal
Lies in the distant dim unknown,
A yearning effort of the soul
To reach a new unfathomed zone.

AUTUMN

THE tints of gold and scarlet that spread o'er
The foliage of creepers climbing high,
The winnowed grain upon the garner's floor
All show that mellow Autumntide draws nigh.
That sweet and restful time when Nature's hand
Paints, as it were, the sunset of the year,
And scatters far and wide throughout the land
Deep-tinted emblems, burnished, brown, and sere.
The gorgeous pageantry of heathered dale,
Half hidden in the dreamy floating mist,
The melancholy sighings of the gale,
The leaves disjointed flying where they list,
All seem to join in mien and note and tread
To swell one vast deep-throated funeral march,
A solemn requiem for a season dead
Re-echoed in the broad ethereal arch.
A brooding spirit seems to spread its shade
Upon the visage of the woodlands drear
Where fern and bracken fallen and decayed
Serve but to deck pale Summer's sombre bier.

AUTUMN

The rustling brook whose gentle purling stream
Sings in its wonted notes a sylvan song,
Finds in this mellow time a graceful theme
To murmur softly as it flows along.
All Nature rests, and dons a gloomy hue
But for a season, till the woods awake,
When in their vernal freshness dressed anew
Laughing and smiling for the Spring they break.

VOLITARE PER ORA VIRUM

(ENNIUS)

I

So swiftly is ended our short space of seasons,
Our years seem to fly on the wings of the wind ;
Our lives are all fashioned of trials and treasons
And blessings whose nature is scarcely defined.

II

Though we gain or we lose in our own earthly
dealings,
The tide of the years will engulf the whole tale ;
Together forgotten, our failures and feelings
Must lie side by side in the sepulchre's vale.

III

But yet we must strive to endure through the ages,
Enshrined with the heroes of national fame,
To boldly stand forth in our historic pages,
Though cast into shade by a worthier name.

VOLITARE PER ORA VIRUM

IV

But if such a course be withheld from our yearning,
Yet still may we live when our graves have grown
old ;
The seeds of affection once pregnant and burning ,
Cling long to the garden where first they had hold.

DEATH OF GREAT MEN

*“ When your great ones depart, will ye say,
All things have suffered a loss,
Nature is hid in their grave ? ”*

—MATTHEW ARNOLD.

STRANGE doth it seem, when our great ones depart
from the scenes of their labours,
How in the world seems a void and a chasm that
naught can bridge over ;
'Tis not that their lives and their presence alone
seem vanished for ever,
But that the face of all Nature is tinged with a
gloom and a sadness
Flung far around from the grave where the great
one lies peacefully sleeping ;
Nature herself seems entombed in the sepulchre's
dusky abysses ;
Naught seems the same since the breath of the
mighty has flown on the night-wind,
Breath that suffused all around it with life and
awakening vigour,

DEATH OF GREAT MEN

Hushed in the valley of silence, the mystic abode of
the voiceless !

Yet still may we feel that their presence, though
vanished, still hovers in spirit

Round those whom they loved, and their influence
still whispers as though they were living.

Along the dim ages still echo the voices of heroes of
old time,

And naught of discordance can e'er mar the joy of
their harmonied music.

ORPHEUS AND EURYDICE

Slow wandering as the solemn evening fell,
Along the border by the reedy marge
That deep in feathery grass and verdant weeds
Skirted a rustling silver-murmuring brook,
Orpheus saw glimmering 'neath a rising knoll,
Half raised and half reclined beside the bank,
A fairy form that in the failing light
He thought some river-nymph, and gliding on
Soft-footed in the wealth of pasturage,
He looked, but ere his eyes had scarce beheld,
He groaned and trembled as a lofty pine
That shakes beneath the roaring winter blast ;
For there, as if in sleep, yet marred by dreams
Of evil omen, lay Eurydice,
His own Eurydice, the fairest flower
Of all the Thracian plain, with the cold dew
Of Death as diadem upon her brow.

Sunset had blazed its radiant path through heaven,
The glory of the day had passed away
In awful grandeur in the silent west,
And now from bourne to bourne the firmament

ORPHEUS AND EURYDICE

Unrolled its sombre cloak of spangled dusk ;
And Orpheus stood and gazed, nor knew that night
Stole on apace, so mighty was his woe.
Then as a stream that swoll'n long with rain
Bursts o'er its banks and breaks its wonted bounds,
He turned and poured the torrent of his grief :
" Ye gods, ye dwellers in the heavenly courts,
Throned high above the rush and roar of spheres
Rolling for ever o'er their changeless track,
Hear me, avenge my wrong ! Ye shining fires
That burn upon the purple breast of night,
Look down upon my fair Eurydice,
Bear witness of the sorrow in my heart !
Apollo ! wake my lyre to melody
To raise the silent dead, to call the breath
That winged its flight upon the summer breeze,
Back from the dreary chasms of the void.
Oft hast thou taught me wondrous ways of song,
Strains such as pour before thy rainbow throne
Endless throughout the circle of the years,
So that the woods have hushed their murmuring
And brooklets leapt no more from stone to stone,
The high-peaked mountains moving o'er the vales
To catch the echo ere it died away !
Add now this boon unto thy wealth of gifts,
That I may charm my lost Eurydice
Back from the shadowy shores of Emptiness,
Into the sunlit meadow-land of Life
Yet now there comes a thought across my mind,
Winged son of Hope to cheer my lonely grief.

ORPHEUS AND EURYDICE

I, even I, will seek the marshy swamp
That skirts the kingdom of the nether gods,
And with my lyre will dare to stand before
The sceptred majesty of Pluto's sway,
And haply I may find my vanished love."

The golden beams of morning had arisen
And gilded all the eastern sky with light ;
Long rifts of cloud, azure embanked with pearl,
Glistened with fiery peaks of early sun,
As Orpheus wended slow his weary steps
Down the dark path that opening into gloom
Grew yet more dusky as its length wound on,
While from his harp came music that before
Ne'er had flowed e'en upon fair Ida's slope.
Charon midway upon the Stygian flood
Caught the weird chords far o'er the silent shores,
And stood as one transfixed with sudden joy
That lures toward some hidden goal and bids
The lingering step to quicken ; even so
He, guardian of the stream that flowing on
Winds ninefold by the shadowy realms of night,
Turned his rude craft to where the thronging shades
Mingled along the distant river banks ;
They too held thrall'd by the sweet harmony,
And joying in a joy they knew not of,
Spake of the wandering on from year to year
Along the brink, and thought the labour past.
The savage howling from the gaping jaws
Of Cerberus died low, charmed into rest,

ORPHEUS AND EURYDICE

And as the reedy bark slow o'er the wave
Bore the deep flutings from the minstrel's lyre,
He sank in slumber and forgetfulness,
And Orpheus passing on across the marsh
Gained the dark portals of Eternal Night,
Still pouring forth his wondrous minstrelsy
That woke wild echoes through the dark abodes
Till where the tortured souls and phantom ghosts
Wailed 'neath the iron scourge of chastisement,
The groaning ceased, and all around was still.
Ixion ceased his ever-rolling wheel
And Tantalus forgot his burning thirst ;
Gaunt Sisyphus against the infernal steep
Pressing his load, paused at his weary task.
The Furies deep enchanted by the strain
Grew calm and hushed their savage clamouring.
The winding shores of mournful Acheron
Heard not a ripple from the dusky wave ;
Cocytus lulled to sleep its deep lament,
And Phlegethon fast streaming through the night
With blazing torrent circling round and round
The triple gloom of Tartarus withheld
Its roar, and slept beneath the brazen walls.
On through the silent dark he pressed his way
Past all the wonders of the lowest deep,
Black yawning chasms, sundered precipices,
And mountains opening downward from their base,
Crowned with dark peaks of frowning adamant
And fringed with spiring, sombre groves of pine.
Here wound the dim unlighted track where rose

ORPHEUS AND EURYDICE

Twin portals in the rugged threatening cliff
Which to the rapturous melody swung back
Noiseless, and Orpheus stood before the throne
Of Pluto, throned in night whose awful brows
The gloomy cypress sadly garlanded.
Upon his right the deathless Parcæ stood
Toiling for ever at the web and woof
Of myriad threads that mete the span of years
Apportioned to the mortal sons of men.
His left fair Proserpine graced, e'en as fair
As when the plains of Enna knew her step,
And all the meadows deep in fragrant flowers.

The thrilling strains swept on unceasingly,
Swelling now high, now low, and pealing round,
In eddying circles of majestic sound,
When in the midst the sonorous mountains roared,
Deep thunder shook the dark obscurity
And distant cataracts crashed foaming down
Their rugged channels, dashing into spray.
Orpheus, amazed, paused, and his lyre restrained,
Whilst from the throne girt round by shadowy forms,
Fierce, lurid flames leapt headlong each on each,
From whose intensity there issued forth
The voice whose dire utterance holds thrall'd
The denizens of deepest Tartarus.
"O thou, who from the upper tracts of air,
Darest thus violate my sacred seat,
And hold as naught the terrors of the way,
I ask thee not what power hath given thee strength,

ORPHEUS AND EURYDICE

I do not seek the object of thy search,
For thou hast taught me, though thou knewest it
not,

In the high transports of thy lofty song.
Take back thine own, nor tarry longer here,
Lest thou entice the phantoms of the dead
By melody to track thy homeward steps.
Eurydice is thine : thou mayest wend
The upward path, and she shall follow thee,
Shall step where thou dost tread, but look not
back,

Turn not to gaze along the darkling road
Till the first glimmer of the light be seen
And day shines brightly in the lucent east.”
And as the god grew still and hushed his voice,
Thunder again roared through the dreary caves,
Till trembling to its end it died away.

Thus gladdened, Orpheus, full of strong desire
To fold in his embrace his rescued bride,
Yet mindful of the inviolable decree
That bade his eyes look onward to the light,
Set forth upon his journey, and anon
Heard the light steps that travelled in his tread.
Far through the everlasting silences,
Across the desert places of the dead,
O'er the dark boding waters of the stream
He hastened, ever longing to look back
And snatch one glimpse, one fleeting glimpse
behind.

ORPHEUS AND EURYDICE

Already he had gained the final path
'Twixt the bright realms of Day and Death's
 abode,
When o'er him swept resistless as a flood
That foams through all the neighbouring fields,
 and bows
Thick branching oaks, uprooted by its strength,
A burning wish to see the face he loved,
A frenzied passion fraught with hapless joy ;
And thus inflamed he turned, alas, he turned
And knew that all his labours were in vain !
And saw Eurydice with lifted hands,
And heard the piteous words of her lament :
" Orpheus, what god, what mighty rage conspires
To thus confound us both in misery ?
For now the fates relentless call me back,
And sleep falls heavy on my brimming eyes ;
Farewell ! the endless shadows close me round.
Stretching my helpless hands, no longer thine,
Toward thee, I sink in night, farewell, farewell ! "
And backward through the gloom she sped away,
Light and invisible as smoke that mounts
Far through the air, and mingling with the breeze
Passes beyond the border of the sight.

Weighed down with double grief, his lyre in vain
Did Orpheus strike, but Charon heeded not,
And all his wild entreaties bore not back
The Stygian craft along the sandy shore.
So turning full of woe, he wandered on,

ORPHEUS AND EURYDICE

Scarce knowing whither, deeply sorrowing,
Till issuing forth, above him streamed the sun,
And daylight mocked him in its loveliness.

Dawn rose on dawn, and night succeeded night,
Slow stealing on the sunset, mellowing heaven
In silent majesty ; and Orpheus sat
Alone upon the shore and tuned his song
To notes of grief, and charmed the listening waves.
And in his downcast eyes there ever dwelt
The fleeting form of sad Eurydice
Helpless, and sundered from his longing grasp,
By the accursèd stream and hateful marsh.
And when, lured by his melting strains of woe,
The Thracian maidens glided o'er the rocks
And whispered to him messages of love,
He looked not up, and heeded not their words,
In anguish deep and bitterness of soul.
But they, unmindful of his stricken heart,
Burned to avenge his scorn.

It chanced one eve,
In wild and wanton orgies they were joined,
'Mid Bacchic fury revelling through the fields
With dance and torch and choruses of praise
Hymning the god, when in their vagrant course
Him did they see beneath the lonely rock,
Gazing far out upon the darkened wave ;
And rushing on, they tore him limb from limb,

ORPHEUS AND EURYDICE

Scattering them far and wide in hideous glee,
And cast his severed head athwart the stream
That bore it seaward, and the parted lips,
Cold e'en in death, still calling through the foam,
"Eurydice, I come, Eurydice!"
And all the winding river banks replied
In mournful, wailing notes, Eurydice!

A GOLDEN RULE

THIS rule in life I hold to be most just,
That though linked fast in Circumstance's chain,
We yet may sap its strength by constant wear,
And finally break loose, and free ourselves
From every hateful trammel that besets
The perfect realisation of ideals.
The Roman poet once rebuked mankind
For its presumptuous vanity, which urged
That naught could be withheld from those that
 strive,
E'en though the goal were heaven's high attri-
 butes.

So now, though far and distant seems the day
That shall apportion us our longed-for tithe
Of human happiness in whatso state
Our inclinations may direct our flight,
We can, *we must*, remember that our strength
Can mount o'er obstacles, and rise refreshed,
Not deep disheartened by our trying fate.
Deem naught impossible : there is no word
That says " I cannot," for the will is strong,

A GOLDEN RULE

**And patience, hope, and faith in all the powers
The Almighty has bestowed wherewith to fight
And grapple manfully with every foe,
Will narrow e'en the dim horizon's arch
And bring us to the haven, where, afar,
We longed to be, yet all but lost our hope.**

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CONTENTMENT

I

A PEACEFUL life doth end in peace,
For pallid Death no fears imparts,
And as the fights and labours cease,
A gentle calm soothes all those hearts
Whose inner chamber doubted not
The wisdom of our human lot.

II

But strife remains, or fear at best
To those who plained of every state.
Such hearts could ne'er rise to that rest
That fills the souls of those that wait
In strong expectancy and trust
Undaunted by each wintry gust.

III

For calm content is not put on
Save by the practised hand of use,
Nor can expediency e'en don
A cloak that men's whole lives refuse ;
All they that in its shade would bask
Must live its life, and share its task.

HEXAMETERS

CAN we turn back the dim veil of the ages that long
time have vanished,
While for a moment we dwell on the poets that
loftily chanted
In the long distant years that have fled swiftly as
fadeth the twilight?
How their majestic songs swelled and re-echoed in
wild exultation!
Loud rang their lyres in tales of the heroes that
battled and vanquished
Round the high walls and the lofty entrenchments
of Ilium's city;
Joining in battle that ne'er hath been equalled nor
e'er shall be likened!
Homer and Virgil, great names for the ages to
celebrate gladly,
Theirs were the tongues that gave music to mortals
that ne'er can cease sounding;
But as the centuries grow and the world rushes on
in its pathway,
Shall but become the more sweet and the better
belovèd of all men!

ELEGIACS

ERE we return from the visions of days that are
flitting before us,
Ovid, the saddened exile, must we give ear to again;
His was the hand that gave shape to the fancies of
varied creation,
Welding the legends in one mighty and corporate
whole.
Sweetly he sang of the loves and the troubles of
amorous maidens
Seeking their husband's return; weeping their
lover's false faith;
And when the weariness of his long exile had
clouded his spirit,
Mournful and sad were the strains that the musician
outpoured.

ODE TO THE PAST

I

THOU art vanished, yet thy chambers echo to the
passing wind ;
Flying ever as thou speedest voices dost thou leave
behind
Whispering in hidden spaces,
Vacant places :
Singing in forgotten nooks and eerie niches
Whence the glory all is fled,
With thy beauty and thy riches
Mingled with the formless dead.
In the days of all thy triumphs and thy splendour,
When thou reignedst free 'mid dome and lofty hall,
Didst thou dream that all thy power thou shouldst
render
To the silent host of Time, and sink his thrall ?

II

Sweet were thy words, and all thy rapturous singing
Smote through the years and cleft the shield of
Time :
The music of thy harp still trembles, ringing
Its deathless burden of immortal rhyme.

ODE TO THE PAST

Lift up thy head, O Mother, to thy daughter,
Swaying the sceptre of the things that be,
For she shall join thee as the shore-kissed water
At turn of tide remingles with the sea.
Awake! for thy great memories remaining
Build thee a shrine wherein thou canst not die,
From whence thou mayest watch the wax and
waning
Of sun and starlight in the eternal sky.

III

O thou through whom we hold whate'er is ours,
Guiding the present from the shrouded shore,
Where marshalled in the ranks of unseen powers
Thou speakest yet and showest all thy lore,
Thine the prime glory of the distant ages,
The first fruits thine, and thine the thews of
might;
The brightest lustre of emblazoned pages
Is thine for ever by unchallenged right!

IV

Hear us, O Mother!
Great choirs antiphonal
Anthem the night and plead through mists of days
Through which thou wanderest to thy coronal,
Thy garland woven deep of all men's praise.

ORPHEUS AND EURYDICE

Already he had gained the final path
'Twixt the bright realms of Day and Death's
 abode,
When o'er him swept resistless as a flood
That foams through all the neighbouring fields,
 and bows
Thick branching oaks, uprooted by its strength,
A burning wish to see the face he loved,
A frenzied passion fraught with hapless joy ;
And thus inflamed he turned, alas, he turned
And knew that all his labours were in vain !
And saw Eurydice with lifted hands,
And heard the piteous words of her lament :
" Orpheus, what god, what mighty rage conspires
To thus confound us both in misery ?
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And sleep falls heavy on my brimming eyes ;
Farewell ! the endless shadows close me round.
Stretching my helpless hands, no longer thine,
Toward thee, I sink in night, farewell, farewell ! "
And backward through the gloom she sped away,
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Far through the air, and mingling with the breeze
Passes beyond the border of the sight.

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Did Orpheus strike, but Charon heeded not,
And all his wild entreaties bore not back
The Stygian craft along the sandy shore.
So turning full of woe, he wandered on,

ETERNITY

To thee, O dim, O infinite,
To thee, O dark and grand,
Day upon day and night on night,
The dawning and the dying light
Rush o'er the eternal sand.

They fleet across the trackless shore,
They live, they speed, they die,
In endless silent stream they pour
To join the ages gone before
Ere others yet draw nigh.

To thee how small and puny seems
Man's short allotted space,
'Tis as a flight of empty dreams
Of flickering sparks and vivid gleams
Before thy stony face.

To thee, inscrutable and vast,
The final goal of all,
Present is merged and linked with past,
As age and aeon scatter fast
Their dark and dusky pall.

ETERNITY

Before thy throne all years shall fail,
Victor of land and sea,
Creation shudders at thy flail,
The deepest ocean caverns wail
At thy dread majesty.

THE VALLEY OF DEATH

*"The pale kingdoms yawn open ; there must thou enter,
all unking'd, and await what is appointed thee."—CARLYLE.*

AY, all unking'd, ungraced, unsceptred there !
No regal lineage dulls the edge of death.
Naked thou camest to thy mortal state,
Unarm'd with power, unthron'd in majesty,
And thus the fates ordain thou shouldst depart !
The grave can shelter but the human dust ;
Riches and honour cannot there be held,
And earth's most mighty lord is void as one
To whom fair Fame hath closed her gorgeous roll.
The shades of death are dark, and all unpierced
By e'en the thousand rays of diadems ;
A monarch's train can bear no solace there,
For Time hath ceased, and vast Eternity
Outspreads o'erwhelming arms to hide the scene ;
The living cannot wake the silent dead,
Nor any force of man shall ever break
The voiceless desolation of the tomb !
Yet all must enter, all the portal pass,

THE VALLEY OF DEATH

Save those who, gazing o'er the wreck of Time,
Shall see the graves upheaved on every side,
And hear the trump, the echoing peal of doom
Thunder aloud the summons to the dead !
Till then shalt thou, unconscious to the world,
Await for thine appointed time and hour,
And wait alike for what remains to thee,
Thy portion or of bliss or boundless night !

ENGLAND

LEAGUED with a mighty bond that stretches far
To distant isles and far-off continents ;
Embattled by the raging elements,
This island stands, a small yet mighty star ;
An Empire's heart, to which all thrones that are,
That have been, or that shall be, are as tents
To mighty mansions. No jagged ugly rents
Are found its perfect unity to mar.

Forward, O Isle ! pursue thy glorious way,
Scorning the hate of those that can but jeer,
Fearing to strike. Thine is a mightier sway
Than could have been foreseen by sage or seer.

Nor grows thy lustre dim, for day by day
Thy power extendeth—ay, and year on year !

SONG

I

To the wild free woods I'll flee away,
Lithesome in heart and merry and gay,
 Where the shrill-toned ousels pipe,
Where the throstle calls through the livelong day,
And the laverock pours his lyric lay,
 And the berries grow brown and ripe.

II

Deep in the shade of the spreading trees,
Cooled and fanned by the pleasant breeze,
 I'll lay me down to sleep.
When the noontide sun is fierce o'erhead,
I'll rest on a soft and mossy bed,
 Or a rustling leafy heap.

III

From the stream that sings with its airy laugh
Refreshing draughts will I gladly quaff,

SONG

And list to its gentle song.
As through the woodlands sweet I roam
Ere the daylight wanes and I turn me home,
It will echo and flow along.

IV

And as evening falls I will watch the ray
That lighteth the heavens at close of day
And purples the crested peak.
Then on will I speed ere the parting beam,
Fleeting like forms in an empty dream,
Lands others than ours doth seek.

REFRAIN

Adieu to morn, and welcome eve,
And hail its coming gladly.
Whatever shadows it may weave,
If it approacheth sadly,
'Tis still a gentle hour of rest,
And sleep may solace sorrow.
So think the best and hope the best
May brighten thee to-morrow !

TO A SNOWDROP

PALE offspring of the frozen, wintry earth,
Thou art thrice welcome, yet thy early birth
Parts thee from fellowship with Summer's hours,
And thus denies thy grace to fragrant bowers
That for aught else seem perfect ; yet thy bloom
Betokens death to darkness drear, and gloom.
Thou shinest like a beacon through the night
That shows to weary sailors land in sight,
When through the billowy deep, their wild track o'er,
They hail with joy the fast-approaching shore.
But still 'tis sad to think thy early grave
The path of Summer's pleasant days must pave.
A martyr thou ! a victim to appease
The howling winds that shake the leafless trees.
A sacrifice at Winter's barren shrine,
That flowers may bloom when thou art laid supine.

THE VIEW OF THE WORLD

GRIM on the gaunt Matoppos is the tomb
Perched high aloft—the outlook of the world
Of that vast empire whose free flag unfurled
He who sleeps on within the rocky womb
Honoured and loved, and in the darkest gloom
Had faith in, and a proud defiance hurled
'Gainst those who deemed our island sea-em-
pearled,
Tottering and trembling on the brink of doom.
Hushed is his voice, silent his stalwart form
Girt by the rugged heaven-aspiring peaks ;
Floating from whence his wandering spirit seeks
Commune with lands he guided through the storm.
No shrine he needs, no carved and graven stone,
Whate'er else fades this spot shall still be known !

THE REQUIEM OF THE YEAR

I

Oft have I tracked the woodlands drear,
And wandered through pathways far and near
In the noontide calm of an autumn day,
When the fallen fern and bracken lay
Deep with the scarlet shredded leaves,
The broidered carpet that Nature weaves
In her sleepless magic looms that ply
As swiftly the silent years speed by.

II

Oft have I listed and often heard
Humming of bees and chant of birds
In the summer days when the clouds are blue,
And all is joyous and glad to view ;
But on moodier days when the pearl-grey sky
Yearns for a note of sympathy,
Then have I heard a sweeter sound
Echo and verberate around.

THE REQUIEM OF THE YEAR

III

'Tis the mournful wind in the branches sere
Singing the dirge of the dying year,
 Chanting of death as of rest and peace
 Till life awaken, in Spring's increase ;
And its tune though solemn, yet seems to bear
Tidings of joy on the autumn air
 That echo again in the rippling stream
 Like distant chants in a peaceful dream.

IV

For its strains sing low of the Summer past,
Of the sunny moments that fled so fast,
 And we see in our thoughts some leafy nook
 And list to the voice of a babbling brook ;
And the crimsoned woods to our view arise
With splendour that dazzles the drooping eyes,
 Ere the dulcet strains of the music die
 And the lingering leaves flit slowly by.

DESOLATION

THE Grange's walls stand silent, desolate,
Encrusted o'er with moss and lichen grey.
The creeping foliage, rank with many a weed,
Encumbers all around with tangled webs.
Nor far removed there sleeps a stagnant pond
Deep in its thick morass of watery green ;
And on whose face bloom sweet with simple grace
The wild marsh lilies, bred of silent gloom.
Unheard the human step, unseen the form ;
The voice but echoes sadly to the wind,
And in the mournful air such dirges sing
As meet the aspect of the dreary scene.
The ivied gables, heavy with clustering leaves,
When Night's dark mantle shadows all around,
Ring with the dismal cries of solemn owls,
That peer into the evening's solitude.
Yet deeper still within the ancient walls
The hand of death strikes chill upon the heart,
As wandering on from room to room is seen
Naught but the ghostly form of emptiness.
No beating heart, no kindly voice to greet ;
Silence and Darkness reign alone supreme,

DESOLATION

And e'en the hollow chambers of the past,
Filled with the shapeless phantoms of the dead,
Seem to this weird untenanted abode
Thronged with Life's creatures, though their breath
be fled.

Yet oftentimes amid the awesome hush
There swells an eerie chant from unseen lips,
And this seems aye to be the sad refrain :

“Offspring of Death and darkest Night am I,
Nurtured in woe ;
The graveyard wakes my tongue to melody
When Life lies low.
Bright are the rays by dazzling sunbeams cast
On lake and weir ;
The shade I fling where'er my wings have pass'd
Is dark and drear.
My song is gayest when a sombre gloom
Saddens each soul ;
When sullen guns are loud with funeral boom,
And church-bells toll.”

And as the notes draw to their solemn end
The very air seems mournful as the grave,
For every breeze has felt the sombre form
Of Desolation, and has heard her song.

THE LAND OF FANCY

I PASSED in fancy through a land
Of beauty such as fable tells,
Where stretched long tracts of golden sand,
And fountains sprang from glittering wells.

There crystal domes of varied hue
Reflected back the noontide ray ;
The cloudless sky gleamed deeper blue,
The trees and flowers doubly gay.

And wand'ring brooklets sweetly sang
Whilst rippling on through leafy glades ;
The very woodlands loudly rang
With aerial voices from the shades.

Tranquil was all, for Nature reigned
Supreme with undisputed sway,
And dawn arose and twilight waned
From perfect night and perfect day.

THE LAND OF FANCY

No trafficked roar of busy life
 Broke dissonant upon the ear ;
Distant the very sphere of strife,
 And Music's voice alone was near.

The soul so lapt in raptured joy
 Knew no base string in Being's lyre ;
No hand there lusted to destroy,
 No voice shrieked loud in fevered ire.

Peace, Nature's true-born offspring there,
 Crowned all with golden harmony,
And Freedom yet more sweet and fair
 Made all resound in mirthful glee.

Alas ! that such a fairy shore
 Fleets ever farther from the sight,
Its viewless precincts evermore
 Dying within the arms of night.

NIGHT MUSINGS

THE wizard walls of silent sleep
Have woven their fantastic height ;
The star-lit sky has robed the deep
In all the splendour of the night.

Afar I hear the solemn wave
Ripple along the sandy shore ;
I hear the waters as they lave
The towering cliffs, in ceaseless war.

In ceaseless war, unending strife
To scar and blot their giant forms ;
Waves that against their hardy life
Have flung a thousand furied storms.

For not, as now, in peaceful tide
For ever comes the dusky main,
Nor with soft whispers far and wide
Withdraws within itself again.

NIGHT MUSINGS

Hark to the crested billows' roar,
The nearing breakers' sullen boom ;
The crash of ocean on the shore
Re-echoing like the trump of doom.

When all the Furies of the blast
Shriek to the wild and wintry sky,
And ever fleeting, speeding fast,
Wail with an eerie harmony.

But now is peace : and save in thought
All things are hushed, while still I dream
Of sights and sounds of fancy wrought,
Of many an airy hill and stream.

Of life and all its mystic ways
Inscrutable to human eyes ;
Of pathways hidden from our gaze,
Of death that all our skill defies.

Ay, grim Destroyer, thou canst laugh
At Man puffed up with senseless pride ;
Thou hold'st the goblet ; all must quaff
Once from the dark Lethean tide.

Thou gazest o'er the wreck of time
On Man and all his thousand creeds ;
No land escapes thy hand, no clime
But hears thy stern command and heeds.

NIGHT MUSINGS

Far in the east I see the dawn
Glimmer along the steeps of night,
The infant footsteps of the morn,
The heralds of the coming light.

So, often musing, thus I see
The future years and past decades ;
But with the dusk my fancies flee,
Each pensive meditation fades.

TO ENGLAND

THE gates of ancient freedom,
The portals of the just,
Still ope upon thy courtyard
Untouched by worm or rust ;
Still waves the ancient Standard,
The triple flag and true,
Whole o'er thy lofty battlements
Where all the world may view.

Years cannot age thy guardian,
The girdling mystic deep,
Thy sentinel that slumbereth not,
Thy watch that knows not sleep ;
Never shall fail his keeping,
Since thou and he are wed,
Till at the final trumpet-blast
He renders up his dead.

Thy borders who shall compass ?
Who tell each varied port,
From whence sail thousand argosies
With thousand cargoes fraught ?

TO ENGLAND

Who tell the vast dominions
Beneath thy ample sway,
Whereon the sun doth never set,
Where never endeth day?

Thy children, who shall number?
Who count thy myriad seed
That ready stand on distant shores
To list their Mother's need?
And thy past needs have welded
Nations compact in one;
The mightiest Empire Earth hath seen
Since sun succeeded sun.

Far as thy kin are scattered
Through isle and utmost sea—
All, all are linked and grafted
In unity to thee.
Thus round thy Empire stretches
One far extending chain;
Ocean re-echoes ocean's voice,
And plain replies to plain.

ODE TO NATURE IN AUTUMN

I

THE woods are dying ; O Mother, thy children fall,
Slowly, solemnly, leaf by scarlet leaf
Decked with the hues of the sun in the days that
 were all too brief,
The voice of music is hushed in thy crumbling hall !
The gloom of eve is around ;
The shadows creep on,
Weaving fantastic shapes
Far o'er the ground,
Mystic and garlanded
As some dread goddess-head
With shafts of dying light ;
Crimson and thousand tinted hues of gold,
Mingled with that half glimmer that escapes
As some stray echo of an antiphon,
Far from the darkling fold,
Bourned by the sombre portals of the night !

II

Now in the eve of thy glory,
Now as the twilight falls
In thy temple old and hoary,
O'er its dark and dusky walls,

ODE TO NATURE IN AUTUMN

"Hear, O Mother, our hymnal cry ;
Thine is the sway that can never die,
Thine is the rule for aye !"

III

Dost thou heed or hearken,
Mother of Life ?
For in wintry strife,
Thy brow doth darken ;
And thou, wrath-throned on storms to come,
Gazest with tear-dimmed eyes on Autumn's
death ;
Thy fairest child that passeth faint and dumb,
Stricken and spent in breath.

IV

Faster, faster falls the night,
Faster fall the leaves ;
Showering in their golden flight
All the rays of Autumn's light,
All the tints she weaves.
They sink to their silent dusky bed,
Radiant in loveliness tho' dead.

V

Mother, thy child hath passed ; her day is o'er ;
Thy latest born comes 'neath a front austere.
Old e'en in youth, with silvered locks and hoar ;
His visage sere.

ODE TO NATURE IN AUTUMN

Dread is the power with which thou armest him
To fight his weary war,
Through dusky nights and noontides growing dim,
When from his lofty frigid-circled throne,
Reigning in cheerless majesty alone,
He flings from out his boundless store
A silent covering, silver-winged and frore.

VI

Mother of Beauty, Life, and Grace,
Hide not for long thy lovely face
In wintry night :
Soon let thy smile break forth again
Enwreathed in light,
Through sun-lined clouds of April rain ;
Lest we remember not how sweet thou art,
O Soul of Being, heart of inmost heart !

DAWN

THE east flames in light,
The stars are outshone,
Vanished is night,
The shadows are gone ;
Be glad then, O Earth,
Spite of furrowing care ;
Rejoice at the birth
Of a morning so rare.
Hark to the streams
And the tinkling rills ;
Away with thy dreams,
See the sun on the hills !
Each minute he glows
Majestic and grand,
And the beams that he throws
Awaken the land !

SONG

AWAKE, awake, for 'tis morning !
Awake, for the sun is high !
Away, away, at the breaking of day,
'Neath a glad and a sunlit sky !
The dew on the meadow glistens,
The songs of the birds ring around ;
And joy is their strain and joy their refrain,
And with joy fills my soul at the sound !

THE VOICE OF THE SEA

THE voice of distant breakers thundering,
The rhythmic wash and hiss of leagues of wave,
The mingled chorus of the songs that rise
From the deep hollow mermaid palaces ;
The ebb and flow, the roar of water's strife,
The silence and the hush of eventide,
Of summer mood when as the sun declines,
The breast of ocean burns in crimson fire—
These are the choric notes, the glad refrains,
The swells and echoing organ melody
That meet in mystic concord of delight,
Ecstatic fulness of a free-born love—
The lofty pæan anthem of the sea !

TO FORTUNE

I

FORTUNE here and fortune there,
Smiling now but ending
As a fickle maiden fair
In a frown unbending.
If thou must be ever flitting,
Mock me not in winter weather,
Raising hopes and fears together.
Leave me lone when I am sitting
In a gloomy reverie,
If thou canst not constant be.

II

Maiden proud, I fear thee,
Dread thy soft embrace
When I feel thee near me,
When thy tones endear me,
Dread thy double face.
Fairy, never come to me,
If thou canst not constant be.

THE VOICE

O LOOK not on your heapèd gold
With eyes to plan for future store ;
But with a solemn reverent awe
Think on that silent voice of old,
Stronger than earthly monarch's rule,
Crumbling to dust all things desired,
The awful voice of God, "Thou fool,
This night is thy soul required !"

TWILIGHT

O'ER earth and heaven the slow long twilight eve
 Deepens and trembles through the summer haze ;
 The distant hills faint out before the gaze.
With all the legends of the years engraven
The sea sings softly in the little haven
 Of ancient glories bred of ancient days,
 And hidden channels and old ocean ways
That thunderous water-surges watch and weave.
 The sinking crimson o'er the cliff-capped bay
Sheds light athwart the wave ; the twinkling stars
 Steal slowly forth upon the path of Day ;
The eastern steeds that drew Sol's golden cars
 Vanish amid the shadows faint and grey
Before the Evening's flaming scimitars.

SUNSET

Dusk falls: the night descends: the flaming sky
Paints purple islands in a blood-red sea:
The light throbs fast, the shadows faint and flee
And palpitate amid the dark, and die
Into the one great night. Vast oceans lie
Of amber, fringed with glorious majesty
Of pillared crimson, round the canopy
Reared of the burning clouds ranged mountain high.
O breathing picture, shaped by hidden powers,
Fresh from the palace of the great Unseen,
Thy grandeur shed athwart the evening hours
Floods Earth with fire of thy lurid sheen;
And sleep sinks o'er the bosom of the flowers,
And to the night steals forth her silver queen.

RAVENNA TO FLORENCE

YEA, thine by birth, yet mine by equal right—
Nay, more than equal, since the distant day
When the great framer of the immortal lay
Fled exiled from thee, driven from thy sight,
Cast friendless to a gloom more deep than night
To his high soul, that widowed of the ray
Which thou alone couldst shed, but reft'st away,
Scarce cared to know if there were other light.
To him, uncared for, I a shelter gave ;
Within my borders sought he peace, and when
The mighty Hand that beckoneth to all men,
Made sign for him, in me he found a grave ;
And now too late his pardon dost thou crave.
Let him sleep on, he is beyond thy ken.

UNDER A PICTURE

THERE is silence on vale and valley
And the mist wraps round the hill,
The birds have hushed their singing,
The voice of the brook is still ;
And the murmur of drowsy woodlands
And the distant song of the sea
Scarce break the slumbrous stillness
That sleeps o'er the rolling lea.

And through meadowy walks in the distance
Where the streamlet opes its line,
'Neath oaks that spread o'er the waters
Stand shaded the thirsty kine ;
And glimmering deep in the westward
The crimson sunset glows,
And reddens through liquid hazes
As dawn o'er the Northland floes.

SONGS AT EVEN

WHIRR ! whirr ! through the air,
And a dusky form flits by ;
And the owls hoot solemnly
From the ruined turret high,
From their dark and dusty lair.

Toll ! toll ! from the bell,
As the shadows shake and fall
O'er the ancient mossy wall,
And the thick-branched oak trees tall
Whisper to Light, farewell.

Sough ! sough ! from the wind,
And the cold night air sings low
Its burden of grief and woe ;
Measured its song and slow,
For it seeks what it cannot find.

TO ROSES

(IMITATION OF HERRICK)

SWEET flowers of June, I would ye stayed
Throughout the livelong year,
Your lovely blooms with petals weighed
Sink on their fragrant bier :
Long ere the summer days have fled,
Ye languish fast and droop the head.

The balmy leafy month is yours,
The month of short-lived night,
When the great sun his splendour pours
In rays of dazzling light.
Alas ! ye speed away too fast,
Ye scarcely live ere ye have past.

The glorious beams of early dawn,
Light dancing o'er the grass,
Soon seek your pleasant, verdant lawn,
And kiss you as they pass.
Sweet flowers of June, I would ye stayed
When leaves are dead and woods decayed.

TO —

GIRD on thine armour, tho' it be
Battered in countless fights;
Call back the days of chivalry,
Of lists and mail-clad knights!

Strive on, brave heart, tho' toil and care
O'erthrow thee times untold;
The triumph and the trumpet's blare,
The banner's scroll of gold,

Thou shalt not lack if toward the end
Thy face is steadfast set,
And glorious tints of eve shall blend
To weave thy coronet.

CANTICLES OF THE SEASONS

LILAC purple and white,
Hawthorns breaking in bloom,
Blossoming hedges and boughs
Hymn thy new glories, O Spring.

The heat of the noontide sun,
The splash of the rill on the bank,
The scent of the lily and rose,
Thy praises, O Summer, declare.

Leaves, leaves, dead leaves
Drifting in shrivelled heaps,
The wail of the bare-branched trees,
Whisper, O Autumn, thy dirge.

Snow, snow, white snow,
Silently flake upon flake,
Heaping the meadow and field,
Sing for thee, Winter, thy song.

JUNE AND OCTOBER

LILY-GIRDED, rosy cheeked,
With violets to tread upon,
Blue-bells too, and primroses
Dead or dying as she comes,
Paving all the way for her,
Steppeth dainty maiden June.

Bent October, old and hoar,
Comes with weary pace and slow ;
Burdened with much sorrowing,
Through the woodland passeth he,
Looks upon the ruined year,
Weeps upon the faded leaf.

AN ALLEGORY

I

UPON a summer evening
There came athwart a stream
A paddled rush-lined shallop,
And on its stern the gleam
Of gorgeous sunset painted
Winged shadows such as teem
From minster-panes where sainted
Martyrs and hermits shine
In crystal pageant-line,
And glance upon the aisles and cloisters dim.

II

Paddled by phantom rowers,
Forward the shallop sped,
Past river ozier-bowers,
Past green lawn-fronted towers
Deep ivy-garlanded ;
Past lock and weir swift rushing,
By silver streamlets gushing

AN ALLEGORY

From singing waterfalls,
O'er shadowy pearled halls,
Unheeding all the gentle mermaid-calls.

III

Smoothly and softly gliding
From river to the sea ;
The shallop, glancing, sliding,
Passed o'er the distant lea ;
But whither the craft came roaming,
Or whither its journey set—
The craft that gleamed in the gloaming
As a jewelled coronet,—
These things I may not fathom,
Nor search out the riddle-rhyme,
Yet all shall I see when standing
On the mountain of vanished time.

IV

For naught is without some reason,
Naught hid but shall come to light
When the stars shall have had their season
In the quivering seas of night.

EVENING

Lo ! where the evening sun his splendour spreads
O'er land and sea, o'er ocean jutting heads,
O'er rustic homesteads or grey scutcheoned walls
And gardens gladdened with gay waterfalls.
See where his rays tinge each uplifted spire
That points to heaven with myriad hues of fire,
Where distant pastures in the darkening west
Seem to embrace both solitude and rest.
List while the bells peal forth their evening hymn
Across the meadows in the twilight dim.
Where yonder pathway skirts the flowery meads,
And rising, toward the ruin'd castle leads,
There stand I oft upon some green-clad hill
Where all is silent save the babbling rill,
There gaze and listen to the rustling trees
That murmur softly in the gentle breeze,
And all the lovely fragrant scene behold,
Crimsoned and dappled o'er with tints of gold.
Then in my mind a thousand thoughts revolve
Of hidden problems for the mind to solve,
Of ancient customs, wondrous mystic lore,
Of distant battle-strife and tempest's roar,

EVENING

Of breakers dashing high their crested foam,
Of tinkling wethers wandering on towards home.
The crumbling towers that yet command the slope
Still lingering as the final gift of Hope,
Fling their deep shadows far athwart the vale,
And seem to each record some ancient tale.
Far-flung the ages part, the years recede,
Past heroes, known for many a valorous deed,
Crowd in the lofty chambers, armour-dight,
Eager for tourney or for sterner fight.
Once more the vacant halls resound with steel
From warrior's sword and echoing spurred heel;
Once more the oaken-panelled casements ring
With songs of mirth and festive revelling.
Thus all that vanished time has hidden springs
Newborn to life, and added lustre brings,
Ere that my evening visions melt away
As the last lingering light of waning day.
Night gathers fast; the thronging shades increase,
The gloomy woodlands lie deep-wrapped in peace,
The white-robed moon reigns queen athwart the sky,
The stars shine forth in lucent pageantry.
O that for ever I might thus remain
Where dusk enshrouds the rolling verdant plain,
Content to listen to the night-owl's cry
And flapping bats that whirring hasten by.
Fair is the dawn, and fair the sunlit noon,
Yet wandering dreamers love the silvery moon
E'en with a deeper, mystic strength than these,
Though they stretch radiant o'er a thousand leas.

EVENING

For 'neath her gentle influence benign,
Thought leads on thought, and sign on endless sign,
New regions open, unfathomed seas extend,
Present and past with future ages blend ;
The hymning chorus of each zone replies,
And joins the pæan of the echoing skies.
Clamour is hushed ; the sounds of earth die low,
The rhythmic murmur of the ebb and flow
Of countless wild pulsating strength and life
Lulls, and the torrents cease their clashing strife.
Peace reigns supreme beneath the sombre night,
Care girds on wings and melts away in flight ;
Calm fills the breast, and soothes the troubled soul
That sinks to rest and flies in dreams from pole to
pole.

A SPRING CAROL

THE land's awake, the Spring is here ;
The wild woods ring with song,
The chariot of the changing year
Has rolled its course along :
The green buds where the leaves were sere
Have burst in eager throng.

The blue-bell laughs within the dell,
The primrose hides its head :
The clarion wind with swirl and swell
With merry March is wed,
And roars its wedding canticle
O'er hoary Winter's bed.

The branches creak and bend and sway,
And groan with every blast,
Loud heralds of the fuller day
To dawn ere April's past—
Fair April, weeping on her way
Through smiles that gather fast ;—

A SPRING CAROL

Smiles that shall hold perpetual sway
Through gladsome Summer's days,
When the fair blossoming month of May
Shall deck its woodland ways
In flowers laughing at decay
Before the Autumn haze

Dims their bright lustre, shedding deep
The hues and mists of Time,
And casts a gentle shade and sleep
Ere comes the frosty rime,
When Winter's brood their white tears weep
Upon a ghostly clime.

But now arise, rejoice and sing,
And greet with glad acclaim
The radiant face of vernal Spring,
And hail her matchless fame !
Loud let your anthems swell and ring
The glory of her name !

AUTUMN DIRGE

I

THE short half-twilight of November eve
Falls, and the shrivelled leaves in drifted heaps
Legends of Summer's parted glories weave
In the bright days long ere the woodland weeps
Its burden to the ground. I look and grieve
That night descends so damp upon the air,
That gathering mists will grant no short reprieve,
But cloak in gloom all that of late was fair,
Ere Autumn's spell had spread abroad the breath of
care.

II

First blossomed June with all her train of roses,
Sweet maidens decked in vestments rich and rare;
Smiling when long the sunlight sleeps and dozes,
Well-nigh forgetful of the evening air.
Deep in some perfumed garden where the shades
Scarce paint the hours upon the dial stone,
So short a space the long day's glory fades
That night has scarce commenced ere it is gone.

ODE TO POESY

I

OF what thou art no mortal may divine,
Of whence thy birth none may give answering,
Nor gather knowledge of the laurelled line,
Of the first source of all the songs they sing.
Immutable and grand
Before thy shrine they stand
In order since thy heavenly gifts began ;
Thy diapason note
Has swelled through every throat,
And thrilled and gladdened all the heart of Man.
Dark in thy majesty,
Sublime upon thy topmost spiring peaks,
Thy spirit earthly commune seeks
From the vast cloud-isled sky ;
In thy compassioning for human lot
Thou deignest yet within some leafy grot
To dwell with men a space,
Nor hide for aye in mists thy radiant face.

ODE TO POESY

II

Hast thou vast pearled halls on Ida's slope,
And dew-washed palaces of starry light,
And rosy dawn that bursts serenely bright,
Gladdened with beams of Hope ?
Yea, these thou hast, in these thou holdest sway
Regal and sceptred in thy might and power ;
Within thy fanes from day to lucent day
The song of praise prevents each hour ;
Praise of thy beauty peerless, whole and clear,
Modest and smiling on thy glorious way,
Yet shy as some long lingering April tear
That shines upon the flowery breast of May.

III

Yet hast thou humbler dwellings round the base
Of thy great mount,
Sundered from its high crown by airy space,
Yet watered from the same pellucid fount
Of rippling streamlets. These acknowledge thee,
Bear witness in their bounded, measured song,
The music of thy glory still prolong,
Choristers chanting in a lowlier key.

A SPRING CAROL

Smiles that shall hold perpetual sway
Through gladsome Summer's days,
When the fair blossoming month of May
Shall deck its woodland ways
In flowers laughing at decay
Before the Autumn haze

Dims their bright lustre, shedding deep
The hues and mists of Time,
And casts a gentle shade and sleep
Ere comes the frosty rime,
When Winter's brood their white tears weep
Upon a ghostly clime.

But now arise, rejoice and sing,
And greet with glad acclaim
The radiant face of vernal Spring,
And hail her matchless fame !
Loud let your anthems swell and ring
The glory of her name !

NATURE AND LIFE

Summits from base, Chaos and Cosmos blend,
And shuddering planets crash and whirl away,
And darkness cloaks the sun's imperial sway.
Then shall the anguish sin and sorrow send,
Reared in gigantic shrines of infamy,
Speed to its close, and crashing down the steep,
Rush headlong to the angry billowy deep,
O'erthrown and shattered there to gasp and die ;
As long of old down Gadara's incline
Vanished the herd of raving stricken swine.

III

Is gone ? Not yet, but loss shall perish too
In the abyss of years, that spanned across,
Shall join the parted and make gain of loss,
When naught remains to sorrow or to rue.
Hold fast through all the love of all things true,
For though grey lichen and the verdant moss
Garnish the bough that stormy tempests toss,
Its heart, not these, prove what its strength can do.
The worth of pomp is small, life breeds it not,
But rather death or being half resigned
To find no pleasure in the mortal lot,
Save with proud pageantry it be combined ;
But truth shall conquer when vain symbols fall
That hold life's great nobility in thrall.

HYMN TO THE DEITY

CROWNED with laurel and myrtle,
Triumphing, lo, he comes :
Close thine eyes ; screen them from his glory.
Majesty is throned upon his brow,
The awfulness of night shadows him,
The sun draws his chariot ;
The winged horses of the wind speed its wheels
And the lightning lumines all his path.

Yet not alone with myrtle and with laurel
Is his lofty forehead garlanded :
All that noteth glory and dominion,
All that speaketh of a sceptre's wielding
Circles round him.
He the Power unspeakable in grandeur,
Lord-Creator of the ancient mountains,
The torrents and the rushing streams therefrom,
And of all things seen or unseen by mortals
'Stablished on everlasting bases
From vast Eternity before Time was,
Praise him !
Mightier than monarch's is his dwelling,

HYMN TO THE DEITY.

The flaming portals of the sun
Lead onward to his myriad palaces.
Space girds about his footstool.
The glory of the moon and all the starlight
Is his, which he hath made, and hath created.
Therefore to him be honour and dominion
Throughout the circling ages that have vanished,
That are, and shall be born in distant mornings ;
Praise him, Omnipotent and Everlasting !

SPES ANIMI

I

FAR as the East from West,
Far as the northmost pole from southern strand
Is all I know and feel to be the best
From that my powers command.

II

No mean ideal is mine,
But lofty, scarce to be attained of man,
Though with it often twine and intertwine
Base thoughts of charlatan.

III

Yet though my race be long,
Or though my years die as a flickering gleam,
I yearn to have entrapped within my song
Some thought of what I dream.

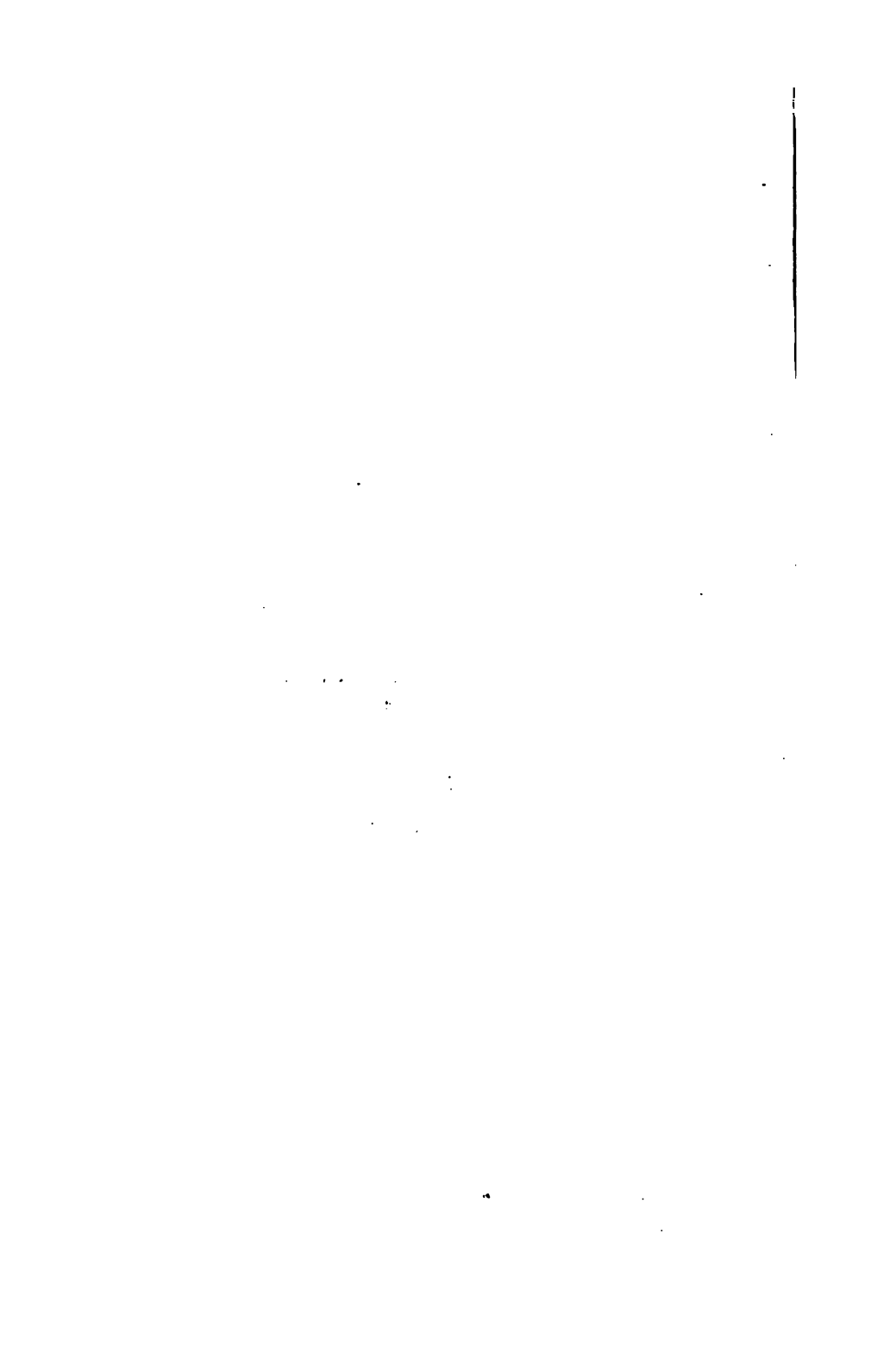
SPES ANIMI

IV

And though my dearest hope
Rest vain, and all its purport unfulfilled,
It shall be said when distant mornings ope,
"The best alone he willed!"

THE END

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